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THE MAGIC OF THE HORSE-SHOE, with other Folk-Lore Notes, by ROBERT MEANS LAWRENCE, M. D. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1898. Pp. iv, 344.

This handsome volume consists of a number of essays, entitled: "The Magic of the Horse-Shoe," "Fortune and Luck," "The Folk-Lore of Common Salt," "The Omens of Sneezing," "Days of Good and Evil Omen," "Superstitious Dealings with Animals," and "The Luck of Odd Numbers;" a topical index is subjoined. The point of view from which the book is prepared is explained in a prefatory note: "Superstitions, however trivial in themselves, relics of paganism though they be, and oftentimes comparable to baneful weeds, are now considered proper subjects for scientific research. . . . The development in recent years of a widespread interest in all branches of folk-lore warrants the hope that any volume devoted to this subject, and representing somewhat diligent research, may have a certain value, in spite of its imperfections. The expert folk-lorist may find much to criticise; but this book, treating of popular beliefs, is intended for popular reading." The introductory essay was prepared for the seventh annual meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society in 1895, and an abstract appeared in this Journal, vol. ix. p. 288, to which the reader may be referred for an analysis of the inquiry. In an account of the superstitions relating to salt, mention is made of the habit of placing salt before strangers, its uncongeniality to witches, the Eastern custom of confirming compacts by salt, the ominous character of salt-spilling, the use of salt in the ceremonies of the church, its employment as an amulet, the table customs connected with salt, and so on. The source of the sanctity of this substance is, without doubt, its antiseptic quality; demons, who are affiliated with corruption, have a natural terror of anything which goes to prevent that dissolution of vitality which they delight in bringing about. The custom of blessing the sneezer is usually explained on the basis of a belief that the action indicates the liability of possession by a demon, due to the temporary departure of the soul. (The citations of ancient beliefs and customs are made from treatises like those of S. Baring-Gould, rather than from the sources of the latter.) But the student will find in this book many suggestions, even although, as already noted, it is not the intention of the author to treat the subjects altogether exhaustively.

W. W. Newell.

THE GOLDEN MAIDEN, and other Folk-tales and Fairy Stories told in Armenia. A. G. SEKLEMIAN. Cleveland, O.: The Helman-Taylor Co. 1898. Pp. xix, 224.

This little collection is made up from the notes and reminiscences of Mr. Seklemian, and from the volumes of Sirwantzdians, "Manana," Constantinople, 1876, and "Hamov-Hodov," Constantinople, 1884. The collections being made in different parts of Armenia, the texts, according to the statement of Mr. Seklemian, somewhat differ; he wishes, however, to emphasize the point that all the stories which appear in the present volume "were taken down directly from the lips of the ignorant, unlettered peasantry of